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SUBJECT: USEU AMBASSADOR SILVERBERG DISCUSSES RUSSIA,
ENERGY SECURITY, IRAN, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND CAP WITH POLISH
OFFICIALS

REF: A. WARSAW 1295
[1](#)B. WARSAW 1271

Classified By: DCM QUANRUD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Polish officials told USEU Ambassador Kristen Silverberg that Poland reluctantly agreed to support resumption of negotiations on the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement after the French Presidency made clear no consensus was needed to move forward. The decision not to push back was in large part driven by the desire to restore Poland's credibility in Brussels and to avoid being seen as reflexively Russophobic. While anxious to promote EU energy solidarity, President Kaczynski and PM Tusk do not want to transfer too much authority to the Commission. The MFA supports continued NATO discussion on sharing threat assessments on Iran to better influence the EU's internal thinking and approach. Russia's security concerns are better discussed in the OSCE than in the NATO-Russia Council. The GOP is pleased with the success of its efforts to assemble a blocking minority on the EU's emissions package and is focused on finding a compromise that will reduce emissions without threatening economic growth or competitiveness. Agriculture Minister Sawicki indicated that Poland intends to maintain the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and noted Poland is loosening internal regulations on GMO and biotech. European Integration Commission Minister Dowgielewicz proposed a spring 2009 conference in Washington focused on U.S.-EU cooperation in Eastern Europe. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) During a November 17 visit to Warsaw, USEU Ambassador Kristen Silverberg and EconOff Lorelei Snyder met with: Marek Sawicki, Minister of Agriculture; Piotr Kownacki, Head of the Presidential Chancellery; Adam Kobieracki, MFA Director for Security Policy; Witold Sobkow, MFA Political Director; Jaroslaw Bratkiewicz, MFA Director for Eastern Policy; Michal Boni, Adviser to Prime Minister Tusk; Mikolaj Dowgielewicz, European Integration Commission (UKIE) Minister; and Piotr Serafin, UKIE Deputy Minister.

"RELUCTANT" SUPPORT FOR EU-RUSSIA NEGOTIATIONS

[1](#)3. (C) MFA Eastern Policy Department Director Bratkiewicz said French officials were adamant that no consensus was needed to resume negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), notwithstanding language in the September 1 Council Conclusions stating that there could be no negotiations until Russia withdraws to pre-August 7 positions. Bratkiewicz and MFA Political Director Sobkow speculated that French President Sarkozy had a personal stake in the decision, because he did not want his efforts to mediate between Georgia and Russia to be considered a

failure. Sobkow said French officials refused to consider releasing Conclusions on the PCA after the November 10 GAERC because of concerns that the text might make reference to deficiencies in the August 12 agreement, which Sarkozy negotiated. Overall they said EU energy concerns were the clear driver for PCA negotiations.

14. (C) Bratkiewicz conceded that Poland and Lithuania had acted "too late" to oppose negotiations, by which time France had already made clear it would achieve its goals, "no matter what." He argued that it is not realistic to expect Russia to withdraw from South Ossetia or Abkhazia anytime soon. Rather than opposing resumption of negotiations, Poland pushed for conditionality on implementation of the PCA after negotiations conclude. Bratkiewicz and Sobkow speculated that PCA negotiations with Russia will drag on for years, pointing out that Russia is satisfied with the existing PCA.

15. (C) Sobkow speculated that France is working hard to predetermine Eastern policy for the Czech and Swedish presidencies. Both countries, along with Poland and Lithuania, are perceived by Germany, France, and Italy as Russophobes that instinctively -- and irresponsibly -- act against Russia. Bratkiewicz said Germany is especially suspicious of Polish motivations, a perception created by the previous Polish government's "overbearing" approach in Brussels. Sobkow said Poland is working to overcome the Brussels "cliche" that Poland is "completely entangled in history." Bratkiewicz pointed out that no one in Brussels listens to the Lithuanians. In order to gain credibility with other Member States, Sobkow said, FM Sikorski is trying demonstrate a degree of moderation in his approach to Russia:

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"We can operate more effectively from the middle, rather than from the margins."

16. (C) On Russia's proposal for a new European security dialogue, MFA Security Department Director Koberiacki said Poland is "prepared to discuss Russian concerns, but not a new security architecture -- it is not needed." He added that neither NATO nor the EU should get involved in strategic discussions with Russia without first developing their own strategic concepts. NATO cannot wait, it has to know what we want to achieve. Poland feels the appropriate place to discuss Russian concerns with Russia is in the OSCE, not the NATO-Russia Council.

RUSSIA / ENERGY SECURITY

17. (C) Ambassador Silverberg encouraged Poland to leverage competition authorities, diversify energy resources including interconnect grids, and cooperate regionally to mitigate Russian overbearance. Polish officials expressed unease about the potential for "Russian blackmail" on gas and agreed that the EU must do more to promote European energy solidarity. Piotr Kownacki, head of the Presidential Chancellery, expressed concern that EU member states are putting their own national interests first. MFA Political Director Sobkow said Member States are worried about what might happen if Russia is unable to deliver on its gas contracts, adding that Poland expects a 25 percent shortfall by 2012-2015. Because smaller EU member states want to make sure they get their due, they are reluctant to support an EU-wide energy strategy that gives too much influence to large member states and the Commission.

18. (C) Kownacki noted that President Kaczynski has been an active proponent of energy solidarity, hosting and attending energy summits and promoting energy corridors that are independent of Russian influence. He said NATO and EU "ambiguity" with respect to Ukraine and Georgia is "dangerous" and could drive Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan closer to Russia. To prevent this, the EU and the U.S. must convince the presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan that they will not lose power if they oppose Russian dominance.

Kownacki said President Aliyev had told President Kaczynski that he is interested in continuing projects aimed at European energy independence but fears that Russia will act against him. If Russia is successful in removing Georgian President Saakashvili, Aliyev will feel isolated and turn to Russia. Russia's troop maneuvers near Azerbaijan had provoked only a soft response from the international community.

¶9. (C) Asked about Polish thoughts on President Bush's letter on energy security, Kownacki and MFA officials expressed skepticism that EU competition authorities would be able to limit Gazprom's activities. "Unlike Microsoft, Gazprom is a state," Bratkiewicz said. Kownacki said foreign oil and gas companies in Russia have repeatedly shown they are willing to accept Russia's conditions on market access. He argued that EU rules are not strong enough to counteract Gazprom's determination -- "we could easily discover in the near future that a number of European companies are already owned by Gazprom." The EU authorities have been stricter against EU Member States than against Russia, he added.

¶10. (C) Ambassador Silverberg expressed regret that the Gazprom clause in the Commission's energy proposal had not granted stronger shared authority to both the Commission and Member States. Kownacki said President Kaczynski would have supported creating an independent authority, but he could not accept transferring national authority to the Commission, due to the already limited leverage that smaller Member States have with the Commission. Dowgielewicz said the Government had also concluded that it would be dangerous to transfer too much power to the Commission, leaving Member States no independent ability to restrict third country purchases. Sobkow and Bratkiewicz, however, seemed open to supporting a stronger Commission role. Both Kownacki and Dowgielewicz expressed support for opening the energy chapter with Turkey.

IRAN, NONPROLIFERATION

¶11. (C/NF) Ambassador Silverberg voiced frustration over the difficulty in ensuring rapid and strong implementation of

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UNSCRs on Iran. Noting other key actors would go no further than the EU's minimalist approach, she suggested the EU look further at designations, the insurance sector, and other financial leverage the EU could take to enhance the P5 1 process. Kobieracki sympathized but warned that the U.S. will likely be frustrated with the EU's future stance as well due to continued divergences between the U.S. and "some EU member states'" threat assessment on Iran. The EU is sensitive to avoiding an internal split along the lines of the previous Iraq divergences. Kobieracki recommended that the USG continue the initiative by former U.S. NATO Ambassador Nuland to share intelligence assessments on Iran with the North Atlantic Council for discussion. Despite the EU's inability to coordinate NATO positions, messages conveyed via the NAC can influence parallel EU discussions, especially via the EU Presidency which provides formal read-outs to the EU.

¶12. (C) Kobieracki likened the NPT to Mark Twain's line: the rumors of its death have been greatly exaggerated. He expects the arms control and disarmament agenda to return to the forefront of the international agenda. "We will start next year" on addressing Russia's conventional arms. The Proliferation Security Initiative would benefit from clearer guidance and needs an overall boost.

GAMBLING ON BELARUS

¶13. (C) On Belarus, Bratkiewicz acknowledged that Poland had "gambled" that suspending the EU visa ban would initiate a period of dialogue with the GoB. "It was clear that isolation was not working," he argued. "There was no

reasonable alternative." Bratkiewicz said it is far from clear that suspension of the six-month visa ban will induce any real change in Belarus. Sobkow said Poland assesses that Belarus is increasingly concerned about maintaining its independence and sovereignty and is looking for opportunities to counterbalance Russian influence by attracting Western investment. Belarusian authorities are "terrified" about the effect of the economic crisis on gas and oil prices, Bratkiewicz added, noting that Belarus' welfare programs are funded by reselling Russian gas. He speculated on the increased likelihood that Belarus will soon recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

ESDP - "NO LONGER SKEPTICAL, STILL REALISTIC"

¶14. (C) Kobieracki said Poland is "no longer skeptical, but wants to be realistic" about ESDP. Any meaningful development of ESDP must focus on pragmatic cooperation and be driven by necessity rather than idealized visions. Kobieracki argued that the EU and NATO must each do more to merge military and civilian planning and that planners in each organization could benefit from closer dialogue: the EU could learn much from NATO military planners, and NATO would benefit from EU civilian operations. Kobieracki said Poland expects that HighRep Solana's security strategy proposal will be less ambitious and more general than originally planned, speculating that poor relations with the French Presidency may have played a role.

¶15. (C) Kobieracki characterized the EUPOL mission in Afghanistan as a "total failure, disaster and disappointment-- to put it mildly." The mission's only added value is that it puts an EU flag over national efforts. He said German and French officials had privately acknowledged EUPOL's failure, admitting that national plans to increase the number of police trainers would not resolve the problem. Kobieracki suggested a trilateral, mid-level discussion group is needed in Brussels to improve coordination among the U.S., NATO, and the EU. Kobieracki said a French proposal to establish a High Level Group would be less valuable, but could help to send a signal for bureaucrats to cooperate.

¶16. (C) EULEX has been held up due to a few EU Member States' -- e.g., Spain, Portugal, Slovakia -- delay in recognizing Kosovo, Kobieracki explained. In general, the GoP is undertaking a review to rationalize Poland's involvement in different peace-keeping and stabilization operations. They are increasing emphasis on meaningful, not just symbolic, participation. "We can't be everywhere, and we want to consolidate. The priority is on Afghanistan and ISAF," Kobieracki stressed. Poland remains under pressure from EU partners to engage in Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo,

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Golan Heights, and other missions. Poland will decide to stay where it is most important.

CLIMATE CHANGE - "POLAND IS THE CHINA OF EUROPE"

¶17. (C) Michal Boni, a close advisor to Prime Minister Tusk, said climate change negotiations in Brussels had long been a priority for Tusk. Tusk supports long-term conversion to renewables and nuclear energy, but realizes that for the near future, Poland will be heavily reliant on its large coal reserves. As a result, Poland is concerned that the EU emissions package not jeopardize Poland's economic competitiveness; the Poles want to promote compromises that will address climate change without limiting economic development. Poland is focused on promoting investment in new technologies and creating conditions for long-term conversion to alternative energy sources. Serafin stressed that Poland is the China of Europe. If the EU can find a solution that works for the UK, Sweden, Germany, France, and Poland, there is an increased likelihood of reaching agreement on a UN framework that works for developed and emerging economies.

¶18. (C) Boni said Polish efforts to build a coalition of Member States to lobby the French Presidency for changes to the EU emissions package had achieved more than initially expected. Serafin noted that there had previously been a lack of assertiveness among new EU Member States, who were taken by surprise by the Commission's proposed emissions package, particularly its far-reaching economic consequences. He noted that much of the work on the package had been done by environment ministries, which had not considered the potentially damaging effects on economic growth and competitiveness.

¶19. (C) Notwithstanding Poland's successful coalition-building, Dowgielewicz said there is still a "complete lack of understanding" of Poland's position among older member states. He explained that Poland remains concerned about the volatility of carbon prices and highly skeptical of Commission projections that carbon permits would settle out at 30 euros per ton. Poland has seen estimates that carbon prices could be two to three times higher, which would spell disaster for Poland's economy -- currently the second-most energy intensive in Europe. To protect against potential price spikes, Poland is pushing the idea of a safety valve that would establish a minimum and maximum price for carbon credits. To that end, Boni and Dowgielewicz emphasized the GOP's request that Congressional Budget Office Director Peter Orszag, who has spoken before Congress in favor of such floors and ceilings, or other U.S. experts speak in European venues on these "highly technical, highly complex" issues with real economic consequences. Such USG participation would help dispel the erroneous myth (promulgated in part by the Commission and the French Presidency) that U.S. experts lag behind the EU's thinking on creative solutions. Dowgielewicz is personally raising awareness of U.S. efforts in private EU discussions.

¶20. (C) Dowgielewicz said the chances of achieving a final deal on EU emissions in December are weak. While the EU might be able to agree on certain elements, it would be difficult to reach consensus on the specifics of emissions trading and redistribution of carbon permits. Even if negotiations are not successful on the technical level, he speculated, EU leaders have high expectations and may agree to declare they have reached a deal, while setting aside certain issues to be resolved later. The French are pressing for quick EU adoption and telling fellow EU members that the incoming U.S. administration will agree to the EU position without any strings attached. Dowgielewicz believes this is nonsense and thinks "it would be good for everyone to lower expectations about what the new U.S. administration may be able to do." The world needs to know soon what conditions are necessary for agreement by the Obama administration.

AGRICULTURAL REFORM

¶21. (C) Agriculture Minister Sawicki told Ambassador Silverberg that without France and Poland cooperating, there would be no CAP after 2013. Poland intends to keep CAP going. He said that the CAP Health Check will not be a breakthrough, it will be a continuation of current policy with minor changes. While there may be some changes to CAP,

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they will not take effect until 2014 -- i.e., the Health Check will only have an impact to the extent that it creates a direction for future change. Sawicki said that the Commission must act soon to relieve Polish farmers suffering from low prices for grain and meat. (Comment: Sawicki strongly supports the Commission using export subsidies to reduce the grain mountain piled up in Poland. End Comment.)

¶22. (C) Sawicki said he is not personally opposed to GMO or biotechnology, but for "political reasons" cannot advocate a better policy. He said he did not think the Doha Round and changing the CAP would make developing countries more

wealthy, adding that more investment in developing countries is needed to increase agricultural production, including biotechnology. Sawicki did not respond to Silverberg's assertion that Commissioner Boel points to Poland as one of the Member States that is blocking more liberal approaches to the CAP and that strongly opposes biotechnology.

LISBON TREATY

¶23. (C) According to Kownacki, President Kaczynski continues to await an emerging consensus way forward on the EU's reform treaty before deciding the time is right to sign off on Poland's agreement.

COMMENT

¶24. (C) Concerned about maximizing Polish effectiveness in Brussels, PM Tusk and FM Sikorski have repeatedly demonstrated reluctance to take isolated positions. In large part this is driven by a desire to distance themselves from the previous government and to avoid being seen as emotional, irrational Russophobes. Poland's successful forging of a blocking minority on the EU's emissions package and its efforts with Sweden to promote the Eastern Partnership indicate that Tusk's Government is still strongly interested in articulating and defending Polish interests, but prefers to do so in coordination with -- or under the cover of -- other EU Member States. Poland will continue to be a strong like-minded U.S. partner on most issues in Brussels, but may need more encouragement from us or even assistance in building alliances with other EU Member States.

¶25. (U) This message has been cleared by Ambassador Silverberg.
ASHE